

## **Michigan State University**

### **Current projects in agricultural/rural development involving collaborations between Michigan State University and partner institutions in India.**

**Knowledge Initiative Context:** Balancing sustainability, productivity and social responsiveness

#### **Project 1) - ALO**

**Name of Institution:** Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU)

**Name of Activity:** Building University Capacity to Improve Fruit and Vegetable Supply Chain Development in India.

**Points of Contact;** (TNAU) Dean Vadivel, Horticulture; (MSU) Dr John Kerr.

**Summary of activity that highlights objectives, accomplishments, lessons learned, and funding level and source.** Key activities successfully conducted in the project to date have included two rounds of reciprocal faculty visits, multi-stakeholder workshops on supply chain development, and detailed discussions on curricula, research and engagement issues. (a) to strengthen competencies at TNAU related to all aspects of supply chain development (b) to enhance relevant learning opportunities and (c) to advance the university's ability to support supply chain management and development by building partnerships with relevant actors among the private sector, government agencies, NGOs, and farmer groups. \$297,050 –ALO 2004-2006

#### **Project 2) - PFID**

**Name of Institution:** Multi-stakeholder project with a regional focus on the State of Maharashtra

**Name of Activity:** Mango and mango pulp Industry Development in India,

**Points of Contact;** Larry Paulson (USAID New Delhi); Deepa Thiagarajan (MSU)

**Summary of activity that highlights objectives, accomplishments, lessons learned, and funding level and source.** GAP Workshops have been conducted, educational materials developed for HACCP, GHP and GAP, mango value chain has been analyzed, and initial multi-stakeholder strategic partnerships have been established: To (a) Enhance the ability of growers and processors to meet international requirements for grades and standards; (b) market linkages across supply chains 'mango food systems'; (c) Improve market access for small and medium-scale growers; (d) Promote Indian mango and mango products to importers in targeted international markets; (e) Provide capacity building (training) of small and medium scale growers and processors; (f) Enhance profitability and sustainability for small- and medium-sized farms in Maharashtra. \$907,000 for 3 years. USAID. Contractual period: 2004-2007

#### **Project 3) – USDA**

**Name of Institution:** Various (University of Agri Sciences, Bangalore; Lady Irwin College of Delhi University, New Delhi; UDCT Mumbai; and Bidhan Chandra Krishi Vishwavidhyalaya (BCKV), West Bengal)

**Name of Activity:** Market Development of Processed Food in India: Opportunities for U.S. Food Processors and Marketers

**Points of Contact;** Drs Dawn Pysarchik, Murari Suvedi (MSU)

**Summary of activity that highlights objectives, accomplishments, lessons learned, and funding level and source.** Relevant instruments have been developed, focus groups in 6 major metropolitan cities of India have been conducted, and data collected from over 1400 families. The data is currently being analyzed. \$190,000 from USDA. 2003 -2005

#### **Project 4) – IDRC**

**Name of Institution:** Indian Agriculture Research Institute (IARI)

**Name of Activity:** Program Evaluation capacity building

**Points of Contact;** Dr. Baldeo Singh, Chair of Agricultural Extension and Dr. K. Dr. K. Vijayaragavan, Principal Scientist, Division of Agricultural Extension, Indian Agricultural Research Institute; Dr Murari Suvedi (MSU)

**Summary of activity that highlights objectives, accomplishments, lessons learned, and funding level and source.** A training grant from International Development Research Centre (IDRC) to offer a collaborative workshop to build evaluation capacity in India in March 2006. \$25,000.

#### **In your opinion, what would be the most useful outcomes of the Initiative?**

- The strategic reorientation of universities as institutions ‘engaged’ with a broad network of private and public sector stakeholders together embracing systemic, inter-disciplinary rural development focused on “balancing sustainability, productivity and social responsiveness”.
- This would represent a shift in primary emphasis and role of the university as a generator of ‘techno-scientific disciplinary knowledge’ for commodity production, to a participant in a broad ranging, multi-stakeholder (private and public sector) ‘eclectic knowledge-based society’ that embraced concerns for rural prosperity, food safety and security, and environmental integrity.
- It would also involve a marked shift in worldview from universities as state-funded institutions to multi-funded, entrepreneurial organizations with a strong emphasis, however, on the public good.

#### **Based on the experience or interest of your institution, what do you think are the highest priority opportunities and needs that the Knowledge Initiative should address?**

The highest priority is leadership development for institutional re-orientation appropriate to the universities playing proactive roles in the establishment and development of multi-stakeholder networks’ of people involved in entire and sustainable ‘agri-food systems’ and ‘value chains’. This might involve the establishment of a National Institute for Engaged Academic Leadership for senior university and research institute administrators and directors for example, and/or a series of international workshop seminars on Leadership for Engagement and Systemic Rural Development. It would also include senior administrator and senior faculty exchanges to study leadership in international contexts.

In relation to the increasing entrepreneurial character of the universities it would be advisable to establish a National Center for Intellectual Property Protection to ensure quality and consistency in this emerging and vital arena.

Other, more tactical, priorities would then need to be set within this strategic context of the changing role and functions of academic and research institutions. These would include curricula reforms, reoriented research agendas, transformed extension and other outreach services. It would also involve changes in institutional organizations, to (a) include inter-disciplinary research and development centers, (b) encourage and facilitate innovation and entrepreneurial activities, and (c) develop and manage extra-mural partnership networks.

**What are your institution's most exciting current collaborative agricultural activities or projects with Indian universities?**

MSU current collaborative projects in India particular exemplify the arguments in support of institutional strategic development and the changing role of universities in society through the emphasis of the project work (a) on multi-stakeholder partnerships for food industry development, (b) the development and maintenance of agricultural / horticultural supply chains and agri-food systems, and the implications for curricula, research agendas and engagement activities, and (c) the exploration of the nature and both intellectual and practical challenges of much more 'systemic' approaches to responsible and responsive rural development.

**Could these activities serve as a springboard for priority projects under the Initiative?**

Without a doubt, for they are each suited to expansion beyond their current spatial and temporal boundaries.

**What are the best ways to engage the universities and colleges? Are there useful models of engagement that the Initiative should consider?**

There are many initiatives in the USA and elsewhere in the world, of universities developing strategies and methodologies for engagement with a variety of different stakeholders – from co-participants in agri-food system developments, through potential funding partners for university-based activities like commissioned research, to the citizenry at large.

**What resources will be needed?**

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